

# The Sun

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## Deep Waterways and Boodle.

The Congress Committee on Waterways has sent home from Europe a quiet but a staggering intimation—intimation, in fact, to the effect that Congress will not approve the proposed thirteen foot channel "from the lakes to the passes," but will stand fast on nine feet as the maximum. This decision, if it may be so regarded, will not be seriously considered by the deep waterways shouters. They do not care about channels or other insignificant things. It makes no difference to them whether the Mississippi's tributaries and confluents will float a battleship or a paddle duck so long as they get the control of the appropriation.

Everybody knows what the real matter is with the river trade. It is not a lack of water in the channels of the various streams, for there is as much water there now as there ever was, even in the proudest days of the steamboat business. There is as good a channel at Vicksburg, Memphis, Pine Bluff, Hickman or Cairo as there used to be when the J. M. White, the Robert E. Lee, the Natchez, the Magnolia and scores of other boats carried their merry passengers in luxury and comparative safety and made travel by water a thing to be desired by all who were content to travel at ease and were equipped with something more deliberate than a sample case and a change of cuffs and collars. The river craft have lost their trade to the railroads because they have not kept step with the march of economy and expedition in respect of loading and unloading. The railroads manage these things with mechanical appliances and small retinues. The river boats still poke their noses into caving banks, sometimes to wait for a letter or a bird cage, but always with an overflowing horde of roustabouts, who sing and gamble most of the time, but work hard at odd intervals, and in any event have to be paid for all of the time. The boats have stood still in this particular, while the railroads forged ahead upon the wing of modern progress. The situation is perfectly intelligible, and the solution of the problem is among the preambles of simplicity.

As we say, however, this hint from the Congress tinkers will fall on deadened sensibilities at home. The deep waterways convention soon to assemble at New Orleans and to be addressed by President Taft in his happiest vein is not a stickler for thirteen or any other number of feet. The members of that conquering and convivial body want an appropriation, not a sordid and commonplace water gauge at Cape Girardeau or somewhere else. They will accept nine feet or three feet. It is all the same to them. What they ask is the boodle—they will do the rest.

## The World-Enders at West Duxbury.

The gathering during the last week at the post village of West Duxbury, Mass., of the "Truism Immersionists," as members of a sect also known as the Latter Reign of the Apostolic Church call themselves, to await with prayer and singing of hymns the end of the world, had attracted the curious and furnished the Boston newspapers with a topic for humorous treatment, but there was one observer, the Rev. DILLON BRONSON, a Methodist minister of Brookline, who came to make a serious study of the fanatics and their peculiar exercises.

Mr. BRONSON was admitted to the building where the faithful were assembled, and he spent an hour with them while they professed their faith and sang and listened to revelations of the inspired among them, most of whom were women in the cataleptic state and children laboring under emotional excitement. He said afterward that there was no doubt many of these people really believed the Day of Judgment was at hand, but it seemed to him that they were victims of hypnotism. He could not understand the "strange tongues" in which they spoke, but one of the sisters or brothers was always prepared to translate the revelation. There appeared to be some Scandinavians among the disciples—in fact, there were other foreigners—and when the congregation was wrought up to a pitch of frenzy several messages in different languages or dialects were heard at the same time. The Immersionists, however, were not all illiterate and poor people, and there were more Americans in the gathering than foreigners. One man, who came from Yorkers with his wife, had given up a good position and sold his furniture. A Virginian, a man of considerable wealth, had also disposed of his property, being first in the belief that the end of the world was imminent. Most of the believers were from the New

England States, Massachusetts and Maine being well represented.

When the hour of 10 o'clock on Friday morning came and the cataclysm predicted had not occurred the faithful continued to sing and pray under the inspiration of their leaders, who had been much encouraged by a portent of black clouds in the east the evening before. The end of the world was then set for 6 o'clock. The Rev. J. C. OSGOOD, pastor of the Immersionists, consented to make a guarded statement to a sceptical reporter:

"We are in the closing days. Probably not more than one-tenth of our people are looking for the coming of the Lord to-day, but all the signs show that his coming will be soon. This is the 10th day of Tishri, a day on which momentous events may be expected. The Lord may not come to-day, and He may not come for a year, but we shall keep on praying Him, for we know He will come."

At the time the reverend gentleman, encased in a pair of overalls, was busy cleaning out a feed bucket at his house, and soon excused himself on the plea that he wanted to "lick up" for the afternoon service at the church. Although all the brothers and sisters had been warned not to talk to reporters, they manifested the greatest curiosity to see newspaper accounts of their exercises. They did not neglect their meals; nor did the women fail to pink their hair and give the right touch to their finery when the ungirded regarded them with no spiritual interest. But to unbelievers the most significant thing of all was the frequency of collections at the services. Perhaps a Boston newspaper was justified in publishing the following bulletin from the camp:

9:15 A. M.—Chorus, "This is the Day."  
 9:22 A. M.—A few farewell kisses by the brethren.  
 9:35 A. M.—Not a glimmer of the millennium anywhere.  
 9:40 A. M.—A few refreshments.  
 9:45 A. M.—Dead silence, hopeful waiting by the apostles.  
 9:57 A. M.—Still nothing more unusual than the usual clamor digging on the beach.

10:00 A. M.—World still waiting for the great event for twenty-four hours announced by Brother SWAN.  
 10:03 A. M.—Still one more little collection.

It was quite natural that the neighbors began to complain of the "Truism Immersionists" as a nuisance. They certainly made the night intolerable with their rapturous singing, and the villagers believed that the clamor was a reproach to West Duxbury, which derives some importance from the French cable that comes ashore only a few miles away. Hundreds came to scoff, but none remained to pray. At last accounts the end of the world had been postponed for fifty years, although it might happen at any hour. Unless this warning were sounded we don't see how the Latter Reign of the Apostolic Church could long survive. The melancholy thing about the delusion was that the devout gave freely of their substance, were indeed always ready for a collection, so that they steadily impoverished themselves. There was evidently a beneficiary, perhaps more than one, but in matters of the spirit the law does not seem to be active or even concerned; although when there is no creed involved and the designing thrive it is often invoked.

## The Contract With the College.

The decision of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court for the Second Department in a case of interest to all educational corporations and parents or guardians of children therein has recently been published in the advance sheets of the Law Reports. The respondents, OTTO KEMPNER and OTTO H. DROGE, on April 29, 1903, made and delivered a bond in which the condition was that "if the above bounden obligors, their heirs, executors and administrators or either of them shall well and truly pay, or cause to be paid, promptly upon the said president and fellows of Harvard College \* \* \* the whole of such sums as may become due to the said president and fellows from HENRY KEMPNER, \* \* \* including all such sums as shall become due to said president and fellows for board or gas, or for money advanced therefor \* \* \* together with such sums as may be charged to him \* \* \* for the rent of any room which may be assigned to him, in accordance with his application, before he becomes a student in the university, then this obligation shall be void."

The student entered the university in the fall of 1903 and remained there until June, 1906. On February 28, 1906, in accordance with the usage of the university, he made a written contract for room 409 in Matthews Hall for the year 1906-7, agreeing to pay therefor \$245. He did not return to the university for that year, and the academic authorities after trying unsuccessfully to rent the room for his account charged the rental to him, and on payment being refused brought action on the bond for the sum of \$245 in the Municipal Court in Brooklyn.

The plaintiffs proved the facts set forth, and the defendants moved to dismiss the complaint on the grounds: That the plaintiff had failed to make out a cause of action; had failed to establish any contract with the defendants; that the plaintiff was a foreign corporation and that it had not been shown that it was registered in the State, as required by the general corporation law; that the plaintiffs' bill of particulars stated that the defendants' agreement with the plaintiff was to reimburse the plaintiffs and pay the sums that may be due from HENRY KEMPNER for board or gas or money advanced, and that the evidence introduced did not show that he had used any board or gas during the time he was a student, and that the contract introduced in evidence was made by HENRY KEMPNER while an infant without the knowledge of the sureties. In the Municipal Court the complaint was dismissed. In reversing the Municipal Court the Appellate Division, Justice WOODWARD writing the decision, in which Justices JENKS, GAYNOR, BURR and RICH concurred, said:

"We are not informed upon what ground the learned Court based its conclusion, but we are of the opinion that it was error to dismiss the complaint. The bond in evidence clearly shows a contract between the plaintiff and defendant; it was entered into for the purpose of securing to the plaintiff the payment of the expenses of HENRY KEMPNER during his college course, and the whole device is a quibble. The young man, evidently following the usage of the university and intending to continue his studies, entered into a contract for his room for the academic year of 1906-7, just as the bond fairly contemplated should be done, and the mere fact that for some reason he was prevented from returning does not relieve his sureties from the obligation of paying for the rent of the room, the plaintiff having made reasonable efforts to reduce the damages."

"A fair sample of the reasoning indulged in to support the judgment is found in the contention that under the terms of the bond the defendants are not liable because the room was not assigned to him before he became a student of the university. The term of the bond, it will be remembered, was that it was to secure the payment, among other things, 'for the rent of any room which may be assigned to him, in accordance with his application, before he becomes a student of the university.' And the respondents point out in their brief that this room 'was not assigned before KEMPNER became a student of the university.' But the contract is not for the room assigned to him before he enters the university, but for 'any room which may be assigned to him, in accordance with his application' to become a student of the university. That is the only intelligent construction of the language used, and it is fairly what the contract meant to intelligent men when it was made, and it should not be defeated by any forced construction."

"It is not necessary to discuss the suggestion that plaintiff, in accepting a surety bond, is within the provisions of the general corporation law of this State, or that the defendants have any standing to raise the question of HENRY KEMPNER's infancy. The very object of the bond was to secure the plaintiff against the contracts of infants; was to provide against losses due to irresponsible students. The defendants undertook to say that they would see that his contracts were carried out within the limits of his obligations as a student of the university, and if HENRY KEMPNER made a contract within the scope of the authority conferred upon the bond they are bound to meet the obligation."

The case was sent back to the Municipal Court for trial.

## After the Hurricane.

The story of the storm in the far Southwest is tragic enough, but upon examination not as tragic as it seemed at first. The special fury of the hurricane appears to have descended upon the coast west of New Orleans and upon that part of the eastern shore between the Rigoletto, twenty miles east of the city, and Bay St. Louis, fifty miles nearer Mobile. The latter region is a flat country almost entirely sea marsh and presenting no sacrifices to the storm except the railroad tracks and trestles and the various flimsy homes of hunting and fishing clubs which populate the intervening thirty miles. Here the devastation was very great, but not noticeably personal. Some weeks will be consumed in reinstating the railroads—not only the Louisville and Nashville, which runs through the region already mentioned, but also the Illinois Central, which runs straight north from New Orleans, and which in the Bonnet Carré and Manchac districts has sustained severe losses. These melodramas, however, touch only heartless corporations and may be dismissed with philosophic unconcern.

Of course the disturbance was not confined within these narrow limits. It extended far west of New Orleans, especially including Terrebonne parish, seventy miles or so toward the setting sun, and many other neighborhoods where rice and sugar cane prevail. So far as we can hear, however, there has been no considerable loss of life, even among the fishermen of the Terrebonne Gulf coast, although as the *Picayune* says the worst was experienced:

"In the surrounding country the storm was severely felt, the damage being greatest west of the Mississippi River, the centre of the storm having passed some little distance to the west of this city. On the lower coast there has been considerable damage to crops, sugar houses, fishing camps and buildings, and very high water has been experienced, but so far there have been no authentic accounts of loss of life. When the more exposed localities have been heard from this catastrophe aspect of affairs may be modified, but there is general hope that no serious disaster has followed in the wake of the storm, as has so often been the rule in the past."

Altogether, it would appear that with the exception of great damage to the railroads and to fishing and hunting camps, which for some occult reason the proprietors persist in building on the most temporary and spiderlike plans, the so-called tempest has done not so much harm in fact as the storm of 1906 and other years, and the consequences may as well be taken in "the day's work." Why the railroad companies persistently refuse to fortify themselves against an emergency they know to be practically recurrent we do not pretend to say. The facts are before us now, and we might add have been presented on many previous occasions.

As for losses in connection with the sugar crops, we may safely dismiss them with indifference. At this season of the year the sugar cane ought to be from six to eight feet high. Planted in rows seven feet apart it forms an almost impenetrable mass. These equinoctial storms flatten it out, of course; they have been doing so, with occasional omissions, for a hundred years. It does not materially hurt the cane, and the result of the harvest is not importantly affected. We may safely dismiss that to the limbo of assorted roobacks.

For the rest, Louisiana has had a very strenuous season, but she has had such seasons before and is none the worse for the experience.

## A Brand From the Burning.

The fashion in which our politicians are becoming good, laying aside the service of sin and taking up the arduous if profitable labors of virtue, is certainly the most impressive fact in our public life to-day. It is the Schenectady *Evening Star* which contributes the interesting news of another conversion of a former brutal boss to the high moral platform. Its reference, of course, is to the Hon. W. W. WEMPLE, once a State Senator and leader in political power in the vicinity of his home.

The story of WEMPLE has served as a lesson in every political Sunday school for at least a year. As the victim of a

misinterpreted moral issue he has served to warn the wicked and inspire the good. For WEMPLE, as is well known, is one of those unhappy beings who voted against that bill which "brought racketeering to an end" in this most virtuous community. Notwithstanding the fact that clergymen visited him personally and thundered exhortations from the pulpit, WEMPLE remained unrepentant. As a result when the votes were counted on last election day, sin was rebuked, the moral law vindicated, and WEMPLE remained away from Albany.

A bitter lesson this, that the Hon. W. W. WEMPLE was forced to learn in the hardest of our schools. As a wise man, however, he learned it. How well is shown by the following comment of the *Star*:

"Last Sunday afternoon a large congregation gathered at the Union Presbyterian Church, of which the Rev. Dr. MITZ is pastor, and where the Rev. Dr. ADAMS preached a powerful sermon against the Sunday saloon. If there is one place in the community where racketeering gambling has flourished it is the Sunday saloon. The discouraging petition circulated to bring about the closing of the Sunday saloon was circulated and the signatures of voters asked for. The ex-Senator was there. He was there with both feet, so to speak. He walked right up front and put his name on that petition, and naturally those who were after the signatures were pleased."

"And now Mr. WEMPLE is listed in the 'puritanical element.'"

Does it mean to cast any shadow upon the sincerity of the Hon. W. W. WEMPLE? We hope not. In a time when self-confessed goodness publicly proclaimed is the beginning of all political popularity, does it imagine that the most hardened sinners will not take their profit? We do not mean to imply that the Hon. W. W. WEMPLE is a hardened sinner, not in the least. On the contrary, we recognize him as a fully converted politician. If any one hereafter outruns him in the pursuit of moral issues, with voting attachments, we shall be more surprised than grieved.

Until the French dirigible military balloon *Republique* exploded near Moulins and four army officers were killed by falling from a height of several hundred feet this type of airship was supposed to be a safe and a spherical balloon. In France many hundreds of balloons have been made in cars attached to inflated bags without accident. The introduction of gasoline motors obviously increased the danger of ballooning, for a careless use of the fluid might destroy the car or ignite the envelope above it, but in the operation of dirigibles the violence of the wind seemed to be more feared than the inflammable and explosive gasoline carried. The destruction of the *Republique*, involving the loss of four valuable officers, will no more deter the War Department from continuing the experiments with dirigible balloons than the sinking of a submarine with all on board stops the training of men to fight under the sea. The dirigible balloon has proved its value for warfare. Recently the *Republique* was used in the French maneuvers and was the means of discovering to the army of defense the plans of the enemy. More men are usually killed in the opening skirmish of a campaign than would probably be lost in fifty years of experimenting with airships by a war department.

## THE FIRST STEAMBOAT FARE.

Story Credited to the Pioneer Pay Passenger.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: I believe the subject has been treated in the *Hudon* Fulton celebration week. The author is not named in the source from which I take it.

(Mrs.) CARRIE E. DOTT.  
 BURLINGAME, Kan., September 22.

ONE of the most interesting incidents of a business nature is that which concerns the first steamboat fare paid to Fulton. The narrator of this, who was one of the actors in the scene, says that he happened to be on board when the *North River* arrived, and hearing that the new craft was about to return to New York I went on board and saw the inventor. I found him to be a plain, gentlemanly man, and asked if I could have some of the first fare. He replied, "You can take your chance with us, sir." I asked the amount to be paid, and he named a sum, \$6 I believe. I laid the sum in coin in his open hand, but he remained so long motionless with his eyes fixed upon the money that I thought there might be some mistake. "You can take your chance with us, sir," he said, and he looked up, his eyes brimming with tears, and said, "Pardon me, but memory was busy as I saw this money."

There was a click in the air, and I have ever received for my efforts to adapt steam to navigation. I should be glad if I were able to commemorate the occasion with you over a bottle of wine, but I am too poor to trust we may meet again when this will not be the case.

"The voyage was successful, as every one knows, and terminated without an accident. Some years after this when Fulton had a fleet of three boats plying regularly between New York and New Orleans, and again, he was seated in the cabin as I came in and I saw him glance at me as I passed him. Immediately after he rushed up to me, crying, 'I know it must be you, and although I am old and feeble I must have that bottle of wine now.' It was ordered, and during its discussion he ran rapidly yet vividly over his experience of the world's coldness and sneers, and of the hopes, fears and disappointments that were his share in the history of the steamship experiment and discovery up to the very point of his final crowning triumph."

## Dog Driving Doubts.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: Touching and concerning Dr. Cook and his discovery of a pig in the wall, I am interested in a statement made by my friend who was present at the reception given yesterday to the Arctic hero and who had the pleasure and honor of grasping his hand. My friend was astonished to find the doctor's hand quite soft, and knowing that the hands of dog drivers in the Arctic regions become hard and deformed he immediately declared that the good man never reached the pole. Could you inform me?

I know that the police read a man's trade from the peculiarities of his hands. Perhaps if they applied the same system to the hands of a dog driver, they would find the same thumb prints upon the pole, and so all doubts could be solved.

EDWIN W. GRANTER.  
 JERSEY CITY, September 22.

## For Inquiring Landladies.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: Do you know of any good reason why United States warships, in a home port for exhibition only, should not bear their names in letters big enough to be read from shore on their sides? A canvas streamer hung a few feet above the water line would serve the purpose and cost nearly nothing.

Probably a million persons wandered up and down Riverside Drive Saturday and Sunday wondering which of the big ships was which, and asking policemen who couldn't answer.

New York, September 25.

Job for McGowan.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: Will THE SUN, which looks out on the City Hall every day, have the privilege of publishing a notice of removal? It takes away from the beauty of the dome of the tower and adds no grace to the statue.

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